

## If God's Word is a Priority, Part 3- Acts 28:22-31 – November 14th, 2010

- Today's teaching is titled; "If God's Word is a Priority. It's the third and final part of our series in which we will complete the book of Acts.
  - We now bring this most amazing book to an end ever so beautifully, and every so perfectly, with this teaching about "The Word of God."
- I must confess that I've become sentimental over the last four years as we've studied this book chapter by chapter and verse by verse.
  - The reason is many of you have been with us from the beginning of Acts, and many of you came to this church while we were in Acts.
  - During this time I've watched us grow numerically in the church, but more importantly I'm blessed as we grow spiritually as the church.
  - By way of explanation and illustration, it's like a parent getting sentimental watching their babies, become children, then grow as adults.
- Whenever I'm asked what the secret to growth is, my answer is always the same; "it's simply teaching through the Word of God simply."
  - That's just how it works. When we get into the Word, the Word gets into us, and when it gets into us, it grows us up into spiritual maturity.
  - That's what has taken place in and through our study through the book of Acts: we've grown, and we've matured spiritually.
- It's for this reason, this series is so apropos. We're learning from Paul's life, what it's like if God's Word has its rightful place in our life.
  - In other words, this is what my life will look like if God's Word is a priority in my life, and we saw what the first one is in verses 11-13.
- 1. I'll devote time to it (Verses 11-13)**
- Here we saw how Paul's devotion to God's Word was a lamp to his feet and light to his path saving everyone from perishing at sea.
- 2. I'll have a love for it (Verses 14-15a)**
- Some brothers from Rome traveled long distance to meet Paul because of their love for him, and the Epistle of Romans written by him.
- 3. I'll be thankful and encouraged by it (Verse 15b)**
- Here, Paul was thankful to God and encouraged at the sight of these Romans, to whom his Epistle had been written three years prior.
- 4. I'll win souls with it (Verse 16)**
- Upon his arrival in Rome, Paul is allowed to live by himself but is chained to Roman guards and he wins them to Christ because of it.
- 5. I'll speak the truth in it (Verses 17-20)**
- Because of the false accusations Paul calls a meeting with the Jewish leaders and speaks about the truth because of the hope of Israel.
- 6. I'll be protected because of it (Verse 21)**
- They tell Paul that they hadn't received any letter or bad report about him, likely because it was destroyed in the shipwreck on Malta.
  - In other words, the only letter about Paul to reach Rome was actually a letter from Paul to Rome, which as God's Word, was protected.
- 7. I'll be teachable from it (Verses 22-24)**
- 22 But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect." 23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. 24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.
- v22 The Jews go on to tell Paul that they want to hear what he has to say, because people everywhere are talking against this sect.
  - v23 At their next meeting with Paul even more come where all day he teaches about Jesus from the Law of Moses and the Prophets.
  - v24 Some were convinced by what he said and believed, but there were others who may have been convinced but would not believe.
- Let me hasten to say; Paul begins teaching only after the door is opened for him when they say; "we want to hear about this 'sect.'"
  - This is important by virtue of the fact that these Jewish leaders were curious because people everywhere were talking against this sect.
  - It's interesting how some were convinced and believed, but others would not believe. That doesn't mean that they were not convinced.
- "Christ is set for a sign which shall be spoken against, and to be called 'a sect' has been the constant lot of his faithful church. ...That is always the case, whoever may be the preacher. On the stony ground the seed brings forth no harvest, even though an apostolic hand sows it. To which of the two classes do we belong? Do we believe? Or are we unbelievers still?"
- Charles Spurgeon
- In other words, despite their teacher being none other than the Apostle Paul himself, though convinced they remained unbelievers still.
  - If you're anything like me, you're probably having a difficult time getting your mind around how amazing this teaching must have been.
  - By the way, did you notice how long this teaching was? Verse 23 says that Paul taught from the morning straight through till evening.
- I believe it's Paul's unspeakably strong and equally long teaching that convinces me, though convinced, they chose not to believe.
  - Their decision to not believe, in the face of Paul's convincing teaching can be explained, as we'll see next, by their being un-teachable.
  - Here's the take away; "If God's Word is a priority, then it will be evidenced by being teachable when taught from it, and convinced by it.

### **8. I'll identify those who are against it (Verses 25-29)**

25 They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: 26 "'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." 27 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' 28 "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" 29 [After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among themselves.]

- v25-26 Paul boldly rebukes those who disagreed and began to leave, by quoting Isaiah about them never understanding or perceiving.
- v27 He continues quoting Isaiah about their calloused hearts, deaf ears, and closed eyes preventing repentance so God can heal them.
- v28 In what would've been unthinkable to these Jews, Paul tells them that God's salvation will be sent to the Gentiles, who will listen.
- v29 We're told how after Paul rebuked them quoting Isaiah, and tells them the Gentiles will listen, they argue with each other vigorously.

**Mathew 13:13-15 NIV** This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. (14) In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. (15) For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

Jon Courson in his commentary offers a most insightful illustration; "A number of years ago a coal mine collapsed, and seven miners were trapped inside for three and a half days. Rescue workers dug feverishly, and when they finally broke through the caved-in mineshaft, the miners were whooping and hollering, obviously grateful they had been rescued—until one of the seven said, "Hey, why doesn't someone light a lantern?" The other six looked at their friend, and they realized he was blind. The light was on. The lanterns were lit. The rescue team had brought light into the darkened shaft, but he could not see because he had been blinded by the cave-in. Until the light came through, no one knew who was blind and who could see. The light had to shine on all seven before anyone could differentiate between those who could see and those who were blind. So, too, Jesus taught believer and non-believer alike in order to determine who was truly blind. The light was shining for those who wanted to see. But those who chose to be wicked wouldn't see the light, and it would only prove their blindness."

### **9. I'll be compelled to stay at it (Verses 30-31)**

30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. 31 Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

- v30 Luke tells us that for two whole years, Paul staying in his rented house, welcomed everyone who came to both see and hear him.
- v31 The last verse in Acts. Paul boldly and without hindrance preached the kingdom of God and teaches about the "Lord Jesus Christ."
- Before we go any further I want to point out something worthy of noting; the last three words in the book of Acts are "Lord Jesus Christ."

- For the two years Paul will stay in his house, he will stay at the preaching and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ without hindrance.
- Not only will he preach and teach the Word during those two years, God will use him to pen the prison Epistles during those two years.
- In other words, if it weren't for this two year period in the life of the Apostle Paul, our Bibles may not have included four more books.
- It is because of Paul's staying at it, if you will, that we have the book of Philemon, Philippians, Colossians, and the book of Ephesians.

"Such industry should shame us. Paul was not content with delivering a sermon every day, but kept his house open to inquirers, and poured out continually a stream of holy teaching. ...Thus Luke, beginning at Jerusalem, closes his narrative at Rome, following the footprints of the gospel from the Mount of Olives to the City of the Seven Hills, and showing how the foundations of the church were laid both in Asia and Europe. What was begun with so much heroism ought to be continued with ardent zeal, since we are assured that the same Lord is mighty still to carry on his heavenly designs."

Charles Spurgeon

"I want to say one final thing on the book of Acts before we leave it. My prayer for myself and for all of us is we leave the book of Acts, for only the Lord knows how long we've been in it, it seems like it's been 50 years, that this would always and forever be the book that we turn to have redefined in our hearts what real live Christianity is supposed to look like. The book is not the Acts of the Apostles, it's the Acts of the Holy Spirit, and He's the same yesterday, today and forever, and it's the book we always turn to in order to get back on course, as we continue to serve the Lord."

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